

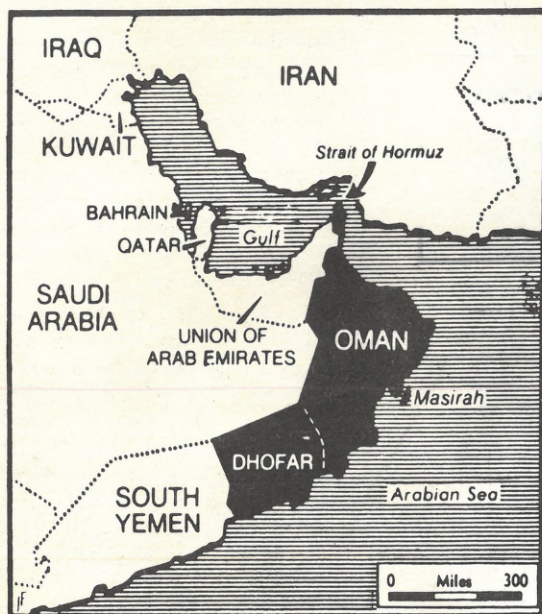
gulf solidarity

Bulletin on Oman and the Gulf

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EDITORIAL

12 YEARS OF ARMED STRUGGLE IN OMAN

On the 9th of June 1965, an armed struggle for the total liberation of Oman was launched under the leadership of the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO). In the areas liberated by the revolution, tribalism has been crushed, illiteracy sharply reduced, and a firm foundation established for new relations among the people. Special agricultural committees have been initiated to collectivize the cultivation and ownership of the land. Women have been freed from the yoke of tribal and colonial oppression, and today are playing a decisive role in advancing the revolution.

The Gulf area is of great economic and strategic importance to imperialism, particularly the oil monopolies. The area is the source for 60% of the world's known oil reserves, and supplies 75% of Europe's oil needs and 90% of Japan's. In reaction to the threat the PFLO and other revolutionary forces have posed to the interests of U.S. imperialism, numerous counter-revolutionary regimes have joined in the attempt to liquidate the Omani revolution, and deprive the masses of their right to build a better life. In spite of its limited resources, the revolution has proven its determination and strength, not only by continuing the struggle, but also in forcing the imperialists to change their strategy to the point where they have had to depose some long-time faithful pup-

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WHY GULF SOLIDARITY?

Gulf Solidarity is aimed squarely at breaking the existing embargo in the establishment media on news and analysis about the growing liberation movements in Oman and the region surrounding the Arabian peninsula. **Gulf Solidarity** is not intended to be a narrowly-conceived bulletin which preaches to the already-converted or directs its information at specialists already familiar with Oman and the Gulf.* Its aim is to popularize the information available, both from the PFLO and other liberation movements and the world press, through brief and to-the-point articles which are both factual and easy to understand. Its scope includes news from Oman, the PFLO and the regime of Sultan Qabus; news from the other Gulf states; news on the Iranian revolutionary movement and the regime of the Shah; analysis of imperialist strategy in the area; background articles; and reports on international support activities. Because the revolutionary movements in the Gulf region are part of the Arab and world revolution, we will also report PFLO positions on other matters of interest. In addition to **Gulf Solidarity**, which is intended to appear six times per year, periodically we will issue more in-depth pamphlets to help our readers gain a deeper understanding of the revolution in Oman and the Gulf. We encourage you to submit articles and letters for inclusion in **Gulf Solidarity** as well as to send your question and comments to help us improve our work.

For twelve years the people of Oman have risen up to seize their freedom. The revolution in Oman continues to advance and threaten the international oil monopolies chief source of profits—the vast oil resources around and under the Gulf. The U.S. is rapidly escalating its military involvement to match its political and economic interests and to replace the British who have been unable to contain the revolutionary forces. Not only are U.S. armaments and technicians pouring into Iran and Saudi Arabia at an alarming rate, but the U.S. has new bases in the area such as the Masirah base in Oman. Tens of thousands of Iranian soldiers and pilots have invaded Oman to try to crush the liberation struggle.

Yet in North America the Omani liberation movement, the PFLO, and the other progressive forces struggling in the Arabian peninsula and the surrounding region are virtually unknown. In this situation the U.S. corporations and government have a relatively free hand to intervene as they wish with ships, troops and the many other means at their disposal to maintain their domination over the peoples of the Gulf region. The strategy and schemes of U.S. imperialism are

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* We call it the Gulf; Iran and the West, the Persian Gulf; Arab peoples, the Arabian Gulf.

OMANI REGIME

DEPENDENCY AND REFORM

"Once upon a time there was a wicked old sultan..." So began a recent article in the **Los Angeles Times**. The article went on in fairy-tale fashion to describe how Said bin Taimur, the former Sultan of Oman, maintained a harsh rule over his subjects, who lived in poverty and backwardness. He maintained slaves and outlawed eyeglasses, shoes and trousers as symbols of modern society. There was only one paved road in the entire country. There were no schools, hospitals or factories. The regime brutally suppressed all political dissent. The country was controlled by the British as a virtual colony.

The article briefly mentions that a rebellion began in Dhofar province in 1965, and quickly grew to be a formidable threat to the regime. Something had to be done. The **Times** goes on to tell how the British, who controlled virtually all the Omani government administration and security forces, staged a bloodless coup against Said bin Taimur in 1970. In his place they installed his son, Qabus bin Said, a British-educated "handsome prince" who was to quickly straighten things out. And so a "new order" began, and "the country was...transformed quickly, lurching out of medievalism into the 20th Century."

The **Times** article describes the beginning of a new era of social development. Oil revenues were spent on roads, schools, hospitals, social services and economic development. Even color TV was introduced, in a country where a tiny fraction of the population is literate. 50% of the budget went to defense, and the rebellion was soon crushed, with the help of troops from neighboring Iran. Although the country has its problems, it is clearly on the road to prosperity and well-being for its citizens. . .

So says the **L.A. Times**. Indeed, Qabus has initiated a new stage of "development" in Oman. But the changes since the coup have not on the whole improved the conditions of the Omani people so much as they have turned Oman from a relatively dormant piece of property into a more profitable neocolony. The claim that the revolution has been ended and the glowing evaluation of what the Qabus regime has done for the people of Oman are full of distortions which must be clarified.



Said Bin Taimur

BRITISH COUP

Said bin Taimur was overthrown because western interests had decided that his regime was too backward for their needs. Not only was all progress being stifled, but there was a danger of losing the territory altogether to the revolution. By 1971, PFLO had liberated 90% of Dhofar province, almost a third of the territory. People all over the country supported the liberation movement. The regime was in imminent danger of toppling. The British would lose a valuable area of influence in the Gulf, and a Marxist state would be created on the Arabian peninsula, an area of key strategic importance. Qabus was brought in to modernize exploitation of the area and consolidate its security.

Upon taking power, Qabus freed the slaves, abolished the most backward laws, and set up newspapers and radio stations. Then he began a campaign to attract western investment. Oman's resources were thrown open to the west. Foreign companies poured in. Oil revenues, from production begun in 1967, continued to mount though most went into construction and military projects.

The people of Oman benefitted little. While western profits soared, most of the skilled and high-paying jobs have gone to foreign specialists, and laborers have poured in from Iran and India.

Many people who flocked from the mostly barren interior to find jobs in the coastal cities such as Muscat and Matrah find themselves unemployed and poverty stricken, merely exchanging the rural poverty of a peasant life for the urban type. Large shantytowns have grown in these urban centers. Most Omanis who have found employment in the new enterprises have largely had unskilled construction and service-related jobs at wages far below those of foreign workers (which are further depleted by the rising inflation in the country). The high unemployment level in Oman has forced many Omanis to emigrate to other countries of the Gulf, where they face even more abuse.

The vast majority of Omanis work in agriculture and fishing, both of which have a good potential for development. Agriculture has received inadequate attention from the regime, which has been more concerned with herding the people into relocation camps and napping the countryside. Fishing is controlled by four companies, including Del Monte. All fish is exported, though the protein is needed by the Omani people. The big companies have increasingly mechanized fishing operations and thus edged out small independent fishermen.

DEPENDENT DEVELOPMENT

Oil is presently Oman's most important resource. Petroleum Development Oman, the company which exploits all Oman's oil, is now 60% government-controlled. As noted above, few Omanis get jobs in oil production. Though the government controls the oil at its source, it lacks distribution capabilities and is therefore at the mercy of the North American and European oil companies. Oman has refused to join OPEC, preferring to make its own arrangements with the companies—generally on their terms.

Even new industries generally make no use of local potential or raw materials. Most factories are effectively controlled by western corporations. The foreign technicians and supervisors receive inflated tax-free salaries and live in luxury. A desalinization plant recently built by a European company does not function. The builders sabotaged the plant, leaving it useless, and there are no Omanis who can run or repair it. This is just one example of

the incredible waste and chaos which occurs under the guise of "industrial development." No attempt has been made to interconnect industries so that an integrated Omani economic base could be built to take the country past the oil boom. In fact, little economic planning of any kind has been pursued. Oman has simply been opened to speculation and quick profiteering.

Construction consists chiefly of luxury developments, such as palaces and a hunting lodge for Qabus, and installations throughout the country to house the rapidly expanding military and police apparatus. There have also been some housing developments, such as Qabus City, a luxury project for foreign specialists. To date, a mere 300 "low income" housing units have been reported by the regime while the construction of opulent new hotels pushes ahead. All materials are imported.

Some schools and hospitals have been constructed—all located in the biggest cities and towns not the interior, and schools only reach elementary level. In fact, the main attention given the interior and Dhofar, (aside from military bases) is to build roads to facilitate troop movement, and to build television and radio stations in an effort to turn the people against the revolution. No programs to organize the population to improve their lives, or any far-reaching attempts to upgrade the people's welfare have been instituted.

THE WINDS OF CHANGE

The PFLO has pointed out that these changes have created very different conditions within the country. The combination of these new reform measures, the Iranian invasion, and the repression of the people of Dhofar has meant some military and political setbacks for the Front. But at the same time the regime has brought to fruition new contradictions which will contribute to its demise.

To begin with, the Front recognizes that the neocolonial economy, the government bureaucracy and the repressive apparatus have mushroomed, while at the same time increasing the long-term instability of the regime. Qabus does not have a strong or stable base of power within the country so he must rely on foreign support.

Oman is a prime example of reactionary "internationalism". Egyptians and Syrians prepare the propaganda. The British, Jordanians, Iranians and Saudis control most of the internal security and police apparatus as well as the bulk of army and air force activity. This massive amount of foreign personnel, possibly as many as 35,000, maintains a tightly repressive climate

throughout the country. Social and political institutions have been substantially engulfed by the Iranian occupation forces, leaving the government in an extremely weak position. The Iranian invasion, in particular, and the Shah's continued occupation and domination of Oman have exposed the unstable and traitorous character of the Qabus government.

Nor has Oman been ignored by the United States. Although American economic interests are still small, Oman's strategic importance is significant. In 1975, Qabus visited the U.S. and obtained \$300 million worth of TOW missiles. *Afrique-Asie* recently reported that Qabus received \$7 million from the CIA (via Jordan) since taking power. In return, the U.S. asked for the use of Masirah Island as a military base. While the Omani government continues to officially deny that it will allow a base, repeated statements have been made by officials on both sides that the U.S. will be permitted some military presence on the island.

The regime has tried to create new social classes, particularly through filling slots in the government bureaucracy. The bribery of a fat job has won over many elements in the petty bourgeoisie who might have supported the revolution. A recent example of this was a student, trained as an engineer, who returned to Oman. He was given an administrative post as a customs officer, along with a fancy villa, a new car and a generous salary. Measures such as this ensure the loyalty of a certain sector of the population, and form a new privileged class with a stake in the regime. In this instance, Oman gained a stooge but lost an engineer.

But the loss of such people from the revolution is compensated for by the increase in the size of the domestic working class, the progressive potential of foreign workers, and the general radicalization of the lower classes in Oman as a result of the increased repression and extravagant and wasteful policies of the regime.

QABUS FIGHTS A LOSING BATTLE

While the Front recognizes that it will take time before the balance of forces is clearly in favor of the revolution, it is clear that Qabus is fighting a losing battle. Oman is not an oil rich country. Reserves will only last for another 20 years at most, and already production is down, with a corresponding decline in revenues. This problem is further compounded by the total lack of development of a stable Omani economic or political infrastructure.



Oman's pattern of development can be summed up in a word: dependence. Without numerous foreign props and injections, the Qabus regime could not survive. The "progress" which has occurred has been akin to that of Taiwan or South Korea—massive influx of foreign capital, and an economy designed to serve the interests of the multinational corporations, not the people of the country.

Meanwhile, Qabus continues to squander rapidly depleting oil revenues. Recently he went on a personal \$1.5 million shopping spree in the U.S., purchasing among other things 6 specially lengthened Cadillacs, a slot machine, 16 refrigerators and a La-Z-Boy chair. It cost \$194,500 to rent a 747 to transport the goods to Oman. On a trip to London he spent \$100,000 on perfume for his bath. For his birthday last year he flew in a British circus for £150,000. While a handful of people in the country receive any type of social welfare, Qabus spends £130 million for Jaguar fighter planes and Rapier missiles.

Because of such waste and indulgence, the government treasury is in trouble, and Oman has had to obtain loans from Saudi Arabia and Iran in order to stay afloat. This, in a country where oil revenues would certainly be enough to finance ambitious social and industrial development, still leaving a surplus. The growing revolutionary challenges to the Iranian and Saudi regimes could weaken their ability to act as permanent supports.

When all is added up, the Omani regime has bought time for itself, but it is by no means entirely secure. Although it cannot be said that a victory for the progressive forces is just around the corner, conditions are definitely moving in favor of the PFLO and the people of Oman.

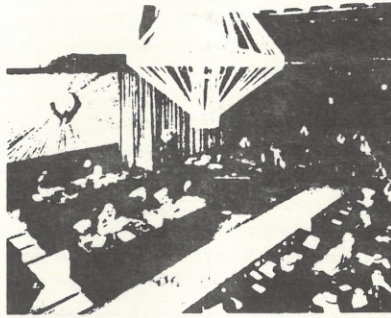
KUWAIT

"DEMOCRATIC EXPERIMENT" KEELS OVER

A widespread misconception exists in the Western press about the liberal attitudes of the Kuwaiti ruling family and its class collaborators, especially on the question of democracy and freedom of the press. Often it is reported that Kuwaiti citizens enjoy a degree of freedom second only to Lebanon in the entire Middle East. While we do not deny that certain limited features of democracy existed in Kuwait prior to the August 1976 government crack-down on civil liberties, despite the trappings of a bourgeois republic, Kuwait's Parliament was never like those of Britain or the U.S. Parliament in Kuwait played no part in real decisions except in extraordinary cases when it faced mass pressure. And the limited democratic rights were certainly not freely granted by the state, but were won through massive struggles and through the nationalist elements in the Parliament (People's Assembly).

Even under the "democratic process," with its popularly-elected body, there were numerous violations of the national charter by the government's executive branch and its representatives in the Parliament. For example, the majority of the population was barred from exercising voting rights because citizenship is denied arbitrarily. Even the former 15-year residency requirement is not enough to qualify now. The government gave the bedouins citizenship, but excluded class conscious elements, particularly city dwellers. Thus, the parliamentary majority was in reality an appendage of the state apparatus, the large landowners and the comprador class. With huge slush funds and bribes, the ruling class managed to ensure that its own people were elected. Those nationalist elements who managed to be elected were subjected to continuous harassment and attacks by the state authorities.

As far as freedom of the press was concerned, the many restrictions and atmosphere of constant fear allowed the government to retain ultimate authority in deciding every question. Nevertheless, the nationalist wing of the Kuwaiti press played an active role in advocating national positions, especially on Palestine, Oman, and the Gulf area. Internally, it raised class consciousness and sided with the poor and the working class. The progressive press functioned to protect the people's interests and to check the reactionary policies of the government both internally and externally. But behind this



A meeting of the National Assembly of Kuwait

limited "democracy" and "freedom," self-censorship through coercion was imposed on the patriotic press in both internal and external matters.

Nevertheless, on 29 August 1976, the government clamped down severely on even these limited rights. It shut down all progressive magazines, dissolved Parliament and appointed a minister to play the role of Parliament in "legislative" matters. The regime charged that Parliament had been "incompetent" and has raised obstacles to government policies and projects. In reality, the government had done almost nothing for the people except when pushed to do so by popular pressure focused in the nationalist forces in Parliament.

Thousands of patriotic Arab nationals were expelled, especially Palestinians and Lebanese who voiced their opposition to the atrocities of the Lebanese right-wing Phalangists and the Syrian intervention during the civil war in Lebanon. Furthermore, the government selectively mobilized its security forces against the slums and other popular areas of the cities, thus spreading a campaign of terror and harassment.

WHAT ARE THE REAL REASONS FOR THIS

REACTIONARY OFFENSIVE?

Internally, the government had adopted the "open door" policy, which meant opening the country's economy to imperialist domination. Prices skyrocketed as inflation spread in the capitalist countries. By the summer of 1976, the housing sector was in unprecedented crisis because the government had failed to build low-income housing and because greedy landlords, backed up by the power of the regime, set their own rental prices and policies. These enabled them to expel any tenant with or without reason. In 1976, rent increases reached 150 to 200%.

Thus the work force, which consists mainly of non-Kuwaiti citizens (47% of Kuwait's total population are native Kuwaitis) lives under severe economic deprivation. Simultaneously, millions of dollars are spent and invested in Western Europe and the U.S. in the form of stocks and bonds which benefit not the Kuwaiti people, but mainly foreign companies and a few Kuwaitis from the ruling family and comprador class. (Kuwait has at least \$204 million invested in Britain, and that may only be a fraction of the real figure. *New York Times*, 28 April 1977) This situation has heightened class consciousness and class contradictions which are manifested in workers' strikes supported by the progressive groups in Parliament, progressive magazines, and by the masses who are angry at the government's total complicity with the interests of the rich.

KUWAIT AND THE GULF SECURITY PACT

The Gulf Security Pact (see article in this issue) is an application of the Nixon Doctrine which aims to strengthen local U.S.-allied regimes militarily, politically and economically so that they can play a police role in protecting imperialist interests. Internal conditions in Kuwait prior to August of 1976, if left unchecked, would have posed a real threat to the success of the pact. The full participation of Kuwait in the proposed pact is of extreme necessity since it is one of the world's leading oil producers. Kuwait's participation could not be accomplished without solving its internal troubles in the classical imperialist-reactionary manner, i.e., abolish all freedom, harass nationalist forces, close or censor the press, and finally, expel unwanted "foreign" elements, such as Palestinians. This done, the government was left with total control, able to implement any policy it chose to adopt for the successful implementation of the security pact which is to protect the security of the reactionaries in the Gulf, and above all, U.S. oil interests and its countless trade interests including military sales. The huge trade interests in the area total billions of dollars. The Gulf Security Pact requires a "stable" government with the opposition under tight control. Furthermore, the role of security forces (intelligence) and the police must be increased. In the last resort, any regime, including

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IRAN: GENDARME OF THE GULF

The opening of a new front of revolutionary war in the Gulf by Omani revolutionaries on 9 June 1965, adjacent to the revolution of the people of Palestine, was a hard blow for world imperialism and its reactionary puppets. U.S. imperialism panicked at the prospect of mass armed struggle in one of the most strategically important regions of the world, sea lane and source for 60% of world oil reserves, and started an all-out attack against these movements. In the period from 1968 to 1971, the imperialists effectively established a new local military and political structure to maintain their interests in the region. New security arrangements ensued following the pattern of the "Nixon Doctrine." Thus regional gendarmes were created to suppress the people's revolution. As in Southeast Asia, where the "Nixon Doctrine" aimed to make "Asians fight Asians," in the Gulf area the Doctrine reads: "Let the Iranians fight Arabs, and let the Arabs fight each other."

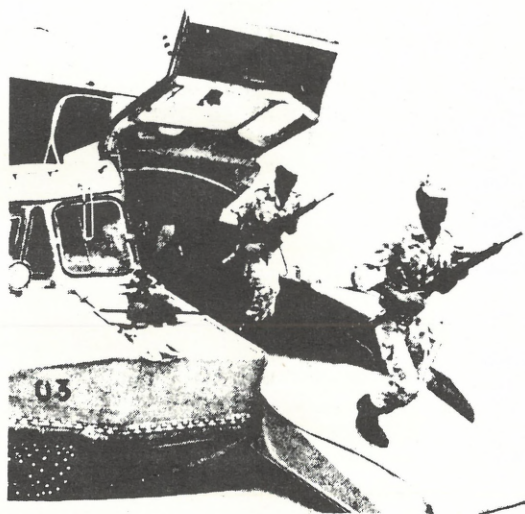
THE SHAH— IMPERIALIST GENDARME

Hence the bourgeois-comprador regime of Iran, headed by the Shah, was chosen as the main political, military and economic base for U.S. imperialism, to be used as a springboard for further intervention in the region. In this connection the fascist Shah said in an interview with the French *Le Point* magazine: "America and Western Europe pay heed to the security of this area along with Japan, but they cannot interfere to protect their interests. We protect the interests of these countries in their behalf."

Apart from Iran's oil wealth, its large population and strategic location, its military-political stature made it a suitable choice for imperialism. The Shah's regime spends more than half of Iran's annual oil revenue of \$20 billion on military expenditure. His 400,000 man army is equipped with tanks, guns, F-4 Phantoms, F-14 Tomcats, F-15 fighter-bombers, land and sea attack, helicopters, submarines and even naval aircraft carriers—supplied by the U.S. and other western countries at the cost of \$3 billion a year.

There are presently more than 20,000 U.S. military advisors and CIA agents operating the war machine of the Shah. The Iranian intelligence services, basically branches of the CIA, engage in various espionage activities and devise conspiracies against the revolutionary organizations in the Gulf area. Most of

the Iranian commercial and press representatives in the Gulf area are secret CIA agents. U.S. investment in and supervision of the construction of military bases, such as the Chah Bahar naval base on the southern coast of Iran, and the development of the spy network called "Project IBEX" by Rockwell International, are further indications of the military role assigned to Iran by the U.S.¹



AGGRESSION IN THE GULF

In 1971 the Shah took over three islands in the Gulf: Little Tunb, Great Tunb and Abu Musa. This was only a prelude to further aggression. On 20 December 1973, U.S.-armed and trained Iranian troops invaded Oman. The Shah's troops, which at the time were estimated at about 30,000 in Oman (according to the *New York Times*), were aided by 4,000 Jordanian troops, British mercenaries and the Sultan's Armed Forces. The invasion forces carried out indiscriminate bombing and napalming of civilian population centers in the liberated zones of Dhofar, to deprive the PFLO of its mass base. The large scale use of anti-personnel bombs, the scorched-earth policies, the poisoning of water wells and random atrocities went unreported by western media because of a news blackout on Oman. The

1. On 28 August 1976, three American "advisors" who were top managers of "Project IBEX" were killed by the Organization of Mojahdeen of the People of Iran in retaliation for the fascist Shah's massacre of Iranian revolutionaries.

Shah's invading army established a modern air base at Thamrit in Dhofar, which is used for Phantom Jets and helicopters on their raids in the area.

The invasion has also changed the traditional power structure in Oman. Both at local and regional levels, the only political authority is that of over 100 mixed Anglo-Iranian commissions which are responsible to the Sultanate's National Security Council (the majority of whose members are foreign officers).

In the past year, Iran has played an increasingly aggressive role in the region. The regime has stepped up its assault on the Omani revolution, led by the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO) and has committed deliberately provocative acts against the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDY). In the early months of 1976, Iranian troops staged an assault along the Dhofar-PDY border and set up positions there. Iranian naval and air force bombardments devastated the area as a backup for the attack.

A NEW POLICY?

Recently the western media has publicized the "withdrawal" from Oman of some units of the Shah's army (mainly ground troops)—as if the Shah has now entirely withdrawn from Oman! Does this signify a change in the Shah's policy in the Gulf. The answer is no. The Iranian troops in Oman are on a three month rotating tour of duty. In the past, units returning home have been hailed as "victorious from Oman" (sic) to hide the low morale among the troops, while at the same time the regime has been sending new troops to the Sultanate. The Iranian troops today are an occupation force in Oman, where they operate in cooperation with troops and special units from Britain, Jordan, Pakistan and Egypt. Even the Shah himself says: "our role in Oman has not ended. . . . As long as the Strait of Hormuz is threatened, the Sultanate of Oman and its stability is important to us." (*Kayhan International*, 5/2/77).

On November 1976, while the reactionary regimes were meeting in the "Gulf Security Pact" conference in Muscat, an American made, Iranian-piloted F-4 Phantom fighter was shot down by the PDY over its Sixth Governate which borders Oman. The captured pilot admitted that he was on a reconnaissance mission. This provocation clearly shows

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GULF SECURITY PACT :

In the past few years there has been increased activity—secret meetings, agreements and declarations—by the reactionary Arab and Iranian governments and US imperialism. The common theme is the urgent need for a strategy for Gulf security, which, in their words, will insure peace and stability in that oil-rich and geographically strategic area. Increasingly this strategy has relied on the establishment of the Gulf Security Pact.

The Gulf Security Pact is only a particular manifestation of the Nixon Doctrine, which calls for strengthening reactionary regimes economically and militarily so that they will be able to safeguard imperialist interests. Instead of sending U.S. troops to fight liberation movements, the Nixon Doctrine creates armed puppet regimes to accomplish this task based on the premise: Let Asians fight Asians. The "Vietnamization" program was made a clear example.

The U.S. imperialist offensive is becoming increasingly fierce and reckless. Reactionary regimes implement U.S. plans which aim to demolish the phenomenon of armed struggle particularly in Oman and Palestine in order to preserve imperialist interests and hegemony through submissive settlements. The Gulf Security Pact is aimed precisely to achieve that objective, as is the equally reactionary "Red Sea Security" pact signed between Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Egypt. The Gulf Security Pact is an extension of the ill-famed CENTO pact which includes Turkey and Pakistan.

U.S. strategists had increasingly considered the Arab area and the entire Middle East to be its exclusive preserve with the highest stakes in the oil-rich Gulf Area. U.S. imperialism revealed its objectives following the 1967 June war which signalled the defeat of the Arab petty-bourgeois regimes. The U.S. wants to crush systematically the Arab national liberation movement and to bring all the regimes into its camp by guaranteeing their security even against the wishes of the people they rule. The U.S. has troops specifically trained in desert warfare and is always prepared to send hundreds of thousands of "advisors" and "technicians" to the region when necessary to safeguard its interests.

In this series of articles we will trace the development and purpose of the



pact and reveal its true nature and the forces backing it. We will further show that this pact will first and foremost safeguard U.S. economic interests (mainly oil) and protect the security of its puppet governments. The Shah of Iran, King Khaled of Saudi Arabia, Sultan Qaboos of Oman and the rulers of Kuwait and the Arab emirates, all reactionaries by any definition, are maintained and strengthened by U.S. imperialism in order to keep the Arab people's resources in the hands of U.S. and European monopolies.

WHO IS BEHIND THE SCHEME?

During the British colonization of the Gulf region over the last two centuries, British presence was justified by reference to constant internal turmoil and continuous external threats. Thus Britain was able to impose agreements upon the local rulers under the pretense of protecting the region from external powers. But the effect was to suppress the people of the area and condemn them to forced underdevelopment. The intent, of course, was to establish British hegemony over the vital and strategic Gulf in order to block the keen interest of the other western colonial powers, particularly France, in that region as well as in India and South-East Asia. In fact other powers as well including Germany, Czarist Russia and Holland were deeply interested in becoming involved in the region.

After the first world war the U.S. directed its attention to gaining a foothold in the strategic and economically

important Gulf region. Immediately following the war Britain and France had carved up the Middle East between themselves but the U.S. was later able to establish strong economic and political ties with Saudi Arabia. These spheres of influence were supposed to limit conflicts. Since the beginning of the century all imperialist powers have called for "world peace" but both world wars were in fact fought by imperialists from the U.S., Germany, Britain, France, Italy and Japan to redivide the colonial spoils. There is indeed a world of difference between the peace desired by people around the world, a peace based on total national independence, sovereignty and freedom, and the "peace" the U.S. imperialists want which permits the oil monopolies and other international corporations to plunder the national resources of the world's people.

The Gulf Security Pact is intended to obtain precisely this last type of peace. Its aim is to provide stability for the reactionaries and the huge U.S. oil interests. Today, in the name of "peace," and "security," we witness an immense and dangerous military build-up by the puppet regimes, particularly Iran and Saudi Arabia. In the background lurks a growing U.S. military presence in the Gulf and nearby at Diego Garcia where nuclear aircraft carriers and submarines are based.

WHAT IS AT STAKE

The increasing importance of the Gulf area followed the discovery of vast oil reserves, the single most important energy source for capitalist industry as well as the raw material for petrochemicals. Thus to the Gulf's significant strategic location which had already made it the subject of historic contention among the imperialist powers was added an even larger and indispensable economic importance as the world's largest source of oil.

The second world war weakened Britain to such an extent that it could no longer be considered the main imperialist power in the Gulf. The British were forced to gradually open up the region to oil monopolies of other countries which jointly participate in the exploitation of the riches of the region. After the war, competition and rivalry between the various imperialist powers virtually ceased as the U.S. became the dominant imperialist power. One requirement of the new order following

WHAT IS AT STAKE?

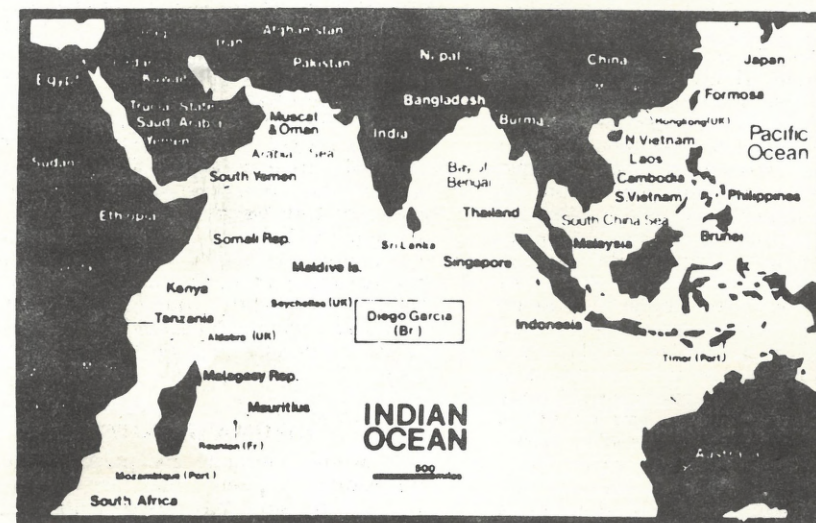
world war II was for the U.S. to block popular and democratic movements in western Europe as well as to use a variety of schemes to combat national liberation movements throughout the world which increasingly posed a clear threat to worldwide imperialist plunder. In this manner U.S. domination spread throughout the areas previously dominated by the former colonial powers thus filling the "vacuum" of power.

Though capitalist and imperialist countries contend among themselves for resources and markets, in the face of people's movements they invariably unite to defend their common interests. In the Gulf area, U.S. imperialism assured itself of the lion's share of the profits from the plunder of the people's national resources particularly oil. The U.S. oil monopolies have no scruples; they use all conceivable means—schemes, tricks and bribes—to accomplish their objectives. For instance, in 1927 the U.S. government signed the Red Line treaty which gave the oil monopolies exclusive privileges to the oil of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and other emirates. In 1953, the CIA engineered a coup in Iran which toppled the progressive government of Dr. Mossadegh (which had nationalized Iran's oil), thereby clearing the way for a U.S. consortium to partially displace the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.

In the Gulf today there is no struggle between imperialist countries. Instead, the lines are drawn with them on one side and the people's movements on the other. Therefore imperialism is forced to iron out the remaining differences within its camp so as to continue its plunder by eliminating all popular opposition.

U.S. INTERESTS

When we closely examine U.S. interests in the Gulf, we see why "peace," "security," and "stability" are of such extreme necessity for U.S. imperialism, its principal puppets, Iran and Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Sheiks and Sultans. Recent reports disclose uranium deposits in Oman and gold and silver in Saudi Arabia. U.S. oil companies own 50% of the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) and 100% of the oil of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. The U.S. owns a sizeable share of Iran's oil, 23.7% of the Qatar Oil Company (QOC) and 23.75% of Abu Dhabi's oil. The U.S. owns large shares in the oil of those emirates which already have dis-



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coveries and U.S. companies are actively drilling in the rest such as Occidental and Phillips in Oman. In summary, U.S. oil monopolies control more than 50% of the total concessions and production.

U.S. domination is by no means limited to oil; the oil companies, other corporations and especially the huge American banks have spread their influence and ownership like a net over the region's resources. Chase Manhattan's chairman David Rockefeller frequently tours the Gulf countries. Citibank and First City Service Bank are also heavily involved from the coastal cities to the desert oases. The names of the banks may vary (in an attempt to maintain a semblance of secrecy) but the largest U.S. capitalists are reaping huge profits from the Gulf's lucrative markets.

Not only oil and banking but trade is at stake for the U.S. in the Gulf which has increasingly become an American lake. The Emirates now get their imports from U.S. companies rather than British. U.S. sales include goods ranging from General Foods' breakfast cereals to Del Monte tinned fruits, from General Motors cars to General Dynamics, Lockheed and FMC war machinery. Some U.S. companies specialize in gold and drug smuggling from their headquarters in Dubai. Other U.S. firms are reaping huge profits in construction in Dubai and Bahrain (McDermott Company) where they are building port facilities, dry docks, sports arenas, and apartment com-

plexes which mainly house the influx of American technical experts. In food resources U.S. companies gained huge concessions for growing fruit as well as fishing rights. In Oman Del Monte is to construct large mechanized canning facilities near Masirah Island. The local fishing industry—and the lives it supports—go down the drain.

ARAMCO—the Arabian-American Oil Company—which is a consortium of mainly U.S. oil companies and controls 100% of Saudi oil, has signed wide-ranging contracts totalling tens of billion of dollars to construct water pipelines, electricity and roads for the present Saudi five year plan.

On top of all this is the huge and lucrative arms export, from the U.S. (the main arms supplier to the region) to Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait, Oman and the rest of the emirates. The trade already totals over 10 billion dollars of which 7.5 billion were sold in 1974 alone. Iran has already purchased about 20 billion dollars worth of the most sophisticated machinery of death from U.S. armasmakers.

Armed to the teeth and spoiling for a fight, the Shah of Iran sent thirty thousand of his troops to fight alongside Jordanians, British and Baluchi mercenaries to fight against the people's struggle in Oman led by the PFLO. This joint effort is in complete accord with the Nixon Doctrine and the proposed Gulf Security Pact which is aimed at legitimating such coordinated aggression in the entire region.

TO BE CONTINUED.

PFLO

UPDATE

OMAN: MEDIA MYTHS

"The rebellion dried up and Qabus was generous to his foes, offering many of them good jobs in Government."

—Los Angeles Times, 11 March 1977

The news blackout on Oman in the western press is selective, because it only tries to hide the existence of the revolutionary movement led by the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman. Periodically we are treated to glowing descriptions of the achievements of Sultan Qabus, the young, reform-minded, benevolent ruler of Oman who, with the help of foreign friends from Britain and the United States, from Iran, Jordan, Sudan and other magnanimous nations, is bringing his country into the modern age. It may be that he likes cadillacs and imports a circus to celebrate his birthday party, but such frills are harmless, aren't they? Usually a sentence or two in such accounts reports that there used to be a guerrilla war here in Oman but it ended a few years back and some of the fighters have even found comfortable jobs in the government of generous Sultan Qabus. The quote above is such an example. Yet, if the war ended in late 1975 as they claim, why do these reports so often repeat the same tired information about the defeat of the PFLO? "Now, finally they have been defeated," we hear again and again from Sultan Qabus and the Iranian Shah. Reports of over a thousand mostly nameless PFLO fighters surrendering are continually issued. Where are they all coming from? Why is it necessary to go on beating the horse so long after its reported demise? Can it be that behind the western wall of silence the Omani revolution still exists?

January 1976—French News Agency reports a British plane shot down in Oman. New York Times reports fighting continues along the Oman-Yemen border as Iranian troops suffer "relatively heavy casualties." PFLO communique reports 28 enemy personnel killed or wounded in shelling of Iranian base at Sarfeet on the border.

February 1976—Two PFLO communiques report 20 enemy killed in a battle south of Sarfeet and 16 enemy positions wiped out. Teheran (Iran) radio reports clashes between its army and guerrillas.

March 1976—PFLO communique reports heavy shelling of Sarfeet base killing or wounding 18 foreign and mercenary troops and completely destroying 15 defensive positions. The PFLO also pointed out that Sultan Qabus was exposing his previous claim (November of 1975) to have finished off the revolution when he declared an amnesty for those who were still carrying guns. Who is carrying guns if the revolution was defeated in 1975?

April 1976—Continued PFLO reports of attacks in Sarfeet as well as in eastern Dhofar.

May 1976—PFLO communique reports a major clash in eastern Dhofar

when guerrillas attack government troops. British government confirms the continuation of the war in answer to a question in Parliament.

September 1976—PFLO reports its forces repel a helicopter landing near the Yemeni border.

October 1976—PFLO reports an attack on a road convoy and the death of a British officer in eastern Dhofar.

(All the above are cited in various issues of *Gulf Newsletter*.)

January 1977—PFLO reports some of its fighters are caught in an ambush in the eastern part of Dhofar. Two PFLO fighters are slightly wounded but enemy losses are heavy. (PFLO Political Report to Paris Conference of Support Committees).

THE OMANI REALITY

It would certainly be pointless and misleading to deny that the massive Iranian invasion has created logistical problems for the PFLO and has caused great hardship and suffering to befall the Omani people. But to conclude an assessment with these preliminary observations would be profoundly incomplete and inaccurate. Much more significant than the difficulties caused by the invasion is the now proven ability of the PFLO to withstand it, to regroup its forces and to carry on the struggle. A PFLO representative in Paris in 1976 summed up the situation:

Communications between Yemen and liberated areas are not cut, but it is no longer possible, as it used to be, for large supply caravans to cross the border. You must remember, however, that during the first years of our struggle, in fact until 1969, we did not depend on supplies transiting through Yemen. And more recently, since the 1973 Iranian invasion, the central and eastern regions have become self-sufficient. External supply problems cannot be decisive for the continuation of armed struggle. Our largest units have not been split up into small groups and reorganized. These groups are fed by the population. They buy basic products, army and ammunition in contraband from the auxiliaries of the Sultan's Army. (Interview printed in *Gulf Newsletter*).

The Iranian forces have built fortified bases in some parts of what were formerly liberated regions of Oman such as at Sarfeet which is near the old border crossing to Democratic Yemen. It is natural that fighting has concentrated in the former liberated areas; where else would invading troops be sent? The massive numbers of troops and the huge technical advantage such as in planes and helicopters allow the Iranian forces to bomb and attack any given location. But only in the sense that no location is secure from attack can it be said that Oman has no liberated areas. Throughout the province of Dhofar, intense fighting continues. The PFLO has many bases still unknown to the enemy



Another PFLO representative in Paris in 1977 reported that PFLO is only following the classic rules of guerrilla warfare which are a foundation of people's war. In this type of mobile warfare, positions advantageous to the enemy are vacated such as those which are difficult to defend from air attack. Those positions which are a thorn in the side of the enemy, such as the hills conveniently in sight of the airbase in Salallah, are retained. The PFLO representative also explained that even in areas under continuing Iranian military occupation, the Omani people are sticking to PFLO social policies such as those which oppose dowries and insist on respect for women. Thus the revolution is more than a battle or military campaign, more than the areas of liberated territory colored red on the map. The revolution's strength is its link with the revolutionary people, its ability to mobilize them to fight for their own liberation.

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

Another classic guerrilla response to an increase in the size of enemy forces is to force their dispersal by generalizing the struggle to new regions. When Iranian forces concentrated in Dhofar, for example, the PFLO began a new offensive in the Jabal al-Akhdar (Green Mountain) region of Inner Oman. The PFLO is also mounting an offensive, though not military, among the growing force of Omani and foreign workers, the latter more than 60,000 mainly from southern Iran (Baluchistan) and India. The PFLO sees its role, whether in Dhofar, Inner Oman or among the workers, as providing an alternative to the regime. Whether this alternative is expressed by armed struggle, literacy and political education classes, medical care, strikes or revolutionary propaganda depends on the ever-changing conditions of struggle. The point is to maintain a presence and to make use of all available means.

The PFLO has been able to survive and continue to fight because it was able to read the new situation and adapt its strategy accordingly. The Ira-

Continued on page 10

PFLO SUPPORT COMMITTEES MEET

Since the first international Conference of Support Committees for the Revolution in Oman was held in Aden in December 1972, Conferences have been held each two years. These provide an opportunity for representatives of the committees to meet together, exchange experiences and information and coordinate their work. The conferences also provide an opportunity for the PFLO to report on political developments in Oman and guide the work of the support committees. The third such conference was held in Paris in February of 1977. Over 20 support committees from Europe and the United States attended along with three PFLO representatives and one representative of the People's Front in Bahrain. (PFB).

The conference began with reports from the committees on the work of the previous two years. The most notable achievement has been in the field of medical support. The Danish committee, KROAG (Committee for the Revolution in Oman and the Arabian Gulf), has coordinated the activities of the European committees which have sent over \$100,000 in medical supplies to the Omani Red Crescent, similar to

the Red Cross. The PFLO asked that this work continue to supply its hospitals with necessary medicines and other items.

Many committees are involved in informational work: magazines, newsletters, records, brochures. The PFLO has had some technical problems interfering with its regular publication of information which have now been solved. The committees agreed to offer any necessary assistance to the PFLO in maintaining the flow of information. The committees also agreed to coordinate and exchange information and publications among themselves.

Next the committee heard political reports from the PFLO and the PFB. The PFLO emphasized and proved, first of all, that the revolution in Oman continues and that the armed struggle is intense, despite claims to the contrary by the Sultan. Next they explained their opposition to the Gulf Security Pact, an extension of the CENTO pact and of the Nixon Doctrine, which aims at uniting the reactionaries to repress the peoples of the Gulf. They expressed their solidarity with the democratic forces in Bahrain and Kuwait fighting the new wave of savage repression in those countries. They noted the unfolding imperialist and reactionary plots aimed at the Palestinian revolution and the Lebanese national movement and declared the Omani people are fully in support of the Lebanese and Palestinian people. They supported the progressive forces struggling against the reactionary Moroccan regime and took pride in the comradely relations the PFLO has achieved with various Iranian national organizations. The Omani revolution considers itself part of the struggle for freedom in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Finally the PFLO noted the support it has received from the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, Libya, Iraq and the support committees.

The representative from the PFB stressed the intensification both of the struggle of the democratic forces in the Arab countries and of the imperialist reactionary and Zionist offensive. New forms of oppression are necessary to maintain imperialist rule such as the Gulf Security Pact and the petroleum Participation Agreements through which oil revenues are channeled back to the capitalist states through investment. The Gulf Security Pact is having difficulties because of the rivalries in the region. Nevertheless both Iran and Saudi Arabia have joined forces in the

war in Oman. The PFB noted that intensified repression in Bahrain only reveals the failure of the strategy of the imperialists to legitimate their control through elected bodies. In conclusion they pointed out that the struggle in the Gulf must not be isolated from those in the other parts of the Arab area nor from the international struggle.

Following thorough discussion of these reports, the conference adopted a resolution, a political statement and a working program. The special resolution honored the memory of Jean-Pierre Vinnot, one of the first supporters of the revolution in Oman, who died of cerebral malaria while visiting the liberated areas of Pakistani Baluchistan in 1975.

The political statement emphasized the continuation of the Omani revolution and discounted the propaganda campaign which claims the war is over. The statement called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops, military bases and fleets from Oman and the Gulf region. It noted its opposition to the Gulf Security Pact and observed that the unity of the revolutionary forces was the key to their victory. The statement concluded by listing the main tasks for solidarity work: first, building broad support for the Omani revolution through information on the aims of the PFLO and the entire revolutionary movement; second, exposing, opposing and confronting involvement in Oman by governments and monopolies from our own respective countries; and third, providing material assistance to the Omani revolution.

The working program, as noted above, called for the continuation of medical support work coordinated through KROAG. Food and condensed or powdered milk are also needed. The PFLO expressed its desire to establish a home for the children of martyrs and a training school for the handicapped. In the informational area, the PFLO agreed to regularize the dissemination of information and to coordinate the exchange of news items. Finally, coordinated campaigns will be conducted internationally around Omani political prisoners.

It was very inspiring to see people from the U.S., Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark, France, Britain, Norway, Iran, Bahrain and Oman meet together with a common objective. In coming issues of **Gulf Solidarity** we hope to report on the practical results of the conference.



The PFLO needs your support
Send your contributions to:

PFLO,
P.O. Box 5037, Ma'ala, Aden
Peoples Democratic Republic
of Yemen.

NEWS BRIEFS

The PFLO reprinted a statement by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party dated 5 February 1977 entitled "Mengistu's Elimination of Democrats in His Latest Coup within the Military Junta." (Saut al-Thawra, 5 March 1977)

The PFLO reported the explosion of two mines beneath enemy military vehicles in the western part of Dhofar on 16 February 1977. The mines were planted by the engineering group of the Omani People's Liberation Army.

The former Prime Minister of the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) and present chief deputy of the supreme court, Abdullah Ali Hajri, was assassinated in London. Hajri was described as "an outspoken rightist who opposed uniting North Yemen with Marxist South Yemen." (Wall Street Journal, 11 April 1977)

A military communique from the PFLO reported an ambush of colonial and reactionary forces in the eastern part of Dhofar on 27 January 1977. After a half hour battle, the commander of the enemy troops, a Baluchi, was killed and other members of his

unit were seriously injured. The PFLO fighters returned safely to their base. Many Iranian troops come from the Iranian Baluchistan and are told they are fighting in Iran.

A new revolutionary organization, the People's Front in Qatar, has formed in that small emirate, a peninsula near the mid-point of the Gulf. The Front charged that Saudi Arabia completely controls the foreign policy of Qatar. Since the Saudis are firmly linked to U.S. imperialism, Qatar's foreign policy is thus an instrument of U.S. imperialism. The ruling family, which has committed innumerable crimes against the people they brought them economic deprivation, took over all the important ministries: foreign affairs, economy, oil, defense, trade, agriculture, industry and education. They also took over all the arable land and left the Qatari citizens with nothing. Security forces have built up to bring increased repression of nationalist and progressive groups. Arab citizens are barred from entering Qatar freely. Some have been expelled because of their "destructive ideas." The royal family feuds over succession but agrees on one point: the people must be kept far from power. The People's Front declared that it will not be cowed by the secret and military police and will not remain silent about the op-

pressive conditions faced by the Qatari masses. The Front resolved to resist with all available means. (Falestine al-Thawra [Iraq], our translation)

A propaganda campaign has been underway in West Coast newspapers on Oman. The Los Angeles Times published two articles, "Oman Enters 20th Century in Quick Burst" (front page, 11 March 1977) and "Sultanate of Oman Finally at Peace" (30 March 1977). The first article was reprinted in the San Francisco Chronicle.

"A strong and prosperous Iran can help stabilize the whole Mid East, upon which America and the rest of the industrial non-Communist world depend for petroleum. The world has an interest in the well-being of Iran," says Jamshid Amouzegar, Iran's minister of state and its chief delegate to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. He adds: "We plow every oil dollar back into our country, and we buy our industrial goods from the West and from Japan. What we do stimulates employment in America and elsewhere." (Wall Street Journal, 11 April 1977) Apparently Mr. Amouzegar is under the misapprehension that the purpose of bullets, jet fighters, and hovercraft is to plow the land. No wonder Iran's harvest mainly consists of lead, steel and electrical wires.

PFLO Continued

nian invasion began in 1973. The Congress of the PFLOAG in 1974 recognized that the massive foreign invasion had both deepened the nationalist aspects of the people's demands (Iranian invaders out of Oman!) and exposed collaborators such as the Sultan who invited the Shah to send his troops to Oman. The PFLOAG therefore decided to rally all those Omanis who would oppose the invasion together into a united front, the PFLO. It was necessary to dissolve the PFLOAG and sever existing political links with its branches in other Gulf states such as Bahrain. Though fraternal feeling and cooperation are still great, the People's Front in Bahrain has no foreign invasion and needs a different political strategy and class alliance.

Since the Iranian invasion began, a sharp political struggle has been waged for the loyalty of nationalist Omanis who might not support all the aims of the revolution led by the PFLO but oppose the foreign invasion. The Sultan's

regime has tried to win over these vacillating class forces with government jobs, bribes and false promises. The PFLO offers no such inducements but relies both on strong nationalist sentiments and hope for a better life based on the concrete experiences of the liberated regions. At the same time, because those won over by the Sultan mainly come from the relatively privileged classes such as the new petty bourgeoisie, students and professionals, the class question in Oman has both heightened and sharpened. The Omani people can see who has sold out to the invaders. Imported Egyptian and Syrian specialists peddle deft propaganda in the news papers, magazines and color television stations—all completely new to Oman. Yet the people see their own lives deteriorating and are not fooled. A rapid expansion of the state apparatus has brought both severe inflation and more systematic repression. Foreign companies arrive in Oman and take wealth from the country leaving little to trickle down to the masses of people.

The PFLO is basing its strategy on the radicalization which is resulting from this process of mass education through experience. Daily events are constantly explained by the PFLO which maintains its presence among the people. The knowledge that the revolution has powerful enemies outside Oman has steered the Omani people to accept the fact that they must be willing to fight for a long time.

Sultan Qabus imports his cadillacs and circuses and builds high new office buildings filled with highly-paid bureaucrats. Some are fooled by these diversions. But the Omani people have been fighting for a long time. They remember the uprising in 1957-59 and the beginning of the present armed struggle on the 9th of June 1965. They know what they are fighting for and they know that they have not yet achieved their aims. They are prepared to continue until they get what they want.

IRAN (Cont.)

the real intentions of the Shah in proposing the "Gulf Security Pact." The Shah is signalling his Arab reactionary rivals, such as King Khaled of Saudi Arabia, that he will not even wait for the pact to be signed to extend his intervention in the Gulf.

FORCES FOR CHANGE

What will decide the future of the area, however, is not the unholy alliance of the reactionary regimes of the region under the imperialist "Gulf Security Pact," but the unity of the people and their revolutionary forces, and the active support of all revolutionary and progressive forces of the world for the revolution in the region, especially the Omani revolution led by the PFLO.

In this regard, the people of Iran, whose children have been used as cannon fodder for the suppression of their Omani brothers and sisters, and for the realization of the expansionist programs of the puppet Shah and his imperialist masters, consider the Omani revolution as their own. The workers, peasants, students, and progressive clergymen, and above all the revolutionary organizations have helped the cause of revolution in the region by intensifying their struggle for the overthrow of the Shah's regime and imperialism, the common enemies of the people of Iran and Oman. The people of Iran are increasingly coming out in support of the



Omani revolution, and in protest of the Shah's invasion. Signs and slogans on walls and clandestine distribution of leaflets are some of the ways they are showing support. Mothers and sisters of Iranian troops in Oman whose relatives have been killed or have not been heard from in a long time, have organized several open demonstrations against the invasion. Also most significant is the active solidarity of the two main revolutionary organizations, the Organization of People's Fedayee Guerrillas and the Organization of Mojahedeen of the People of Iran, with the revolution in Oman. Qabus' trips to Iran have all been "greeted" by revolutionary bombings, even inside his embassy building. Besides their constant political and practical propaganda within Iran, the revolutionary organizations have actively participated in the revolutionary movement of Oman. Recently Comrades Fedayee Farhad Sepehriee and Mojahed Rafat Afraz were martyred in Oman while fighting for the cause of freeing all the people of the region from the yoke of imperialism and local reaction. Through such international solidarity, the Iranian revolutionaries have sealed with their own blood the pact of unity with the other centers of revolution in the Middle East.



KUWAIT (Cont.)

Kuwait, subjected to internal turmoil would be rescued by the other countries in the pact, which still remains to be finalized.

On the Arab level, the national liberation struggle in the area, especially in Oman and Palestine, is being subjected to a coordinated reactionary-imperialist onslaught which aims to crush the revolutionary forces because they are pushing a radical program for social change. The Kuwaiti government is using its oil revenue to prop up puppet regimes and keep them from going under. Thus, it has bailed out the reactionary regimes of Sadat in Egypt, Assad of Syria, Hussein of Jordan and Oman's Qabus with such funds. In the case of Oman, the donations have taken the form of the Dhofar Development Bank, the main purpose of which is to try to win the population away from the revolution in Oman.

Kuwait's role in opposing the national liberation struggles climaxed in its attendance at the infamous Riyadh Conference the purpose of which was to abort the Palestinian armed struggle and to force the Palestinians to accept the U.S.-backed submissive settlement. Hence, it comes as no surprise to see the reactionary Kuwaiti government reveal its true colors: no more pretence of democracy at home and closer ties with its external allies which include only reactionaries and U.S. puppets. The progressive Kuwaiti movement—workers, students, and professionals—must fight an uphill battle to reverse these new developments.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

For one year: \$2 individuals, \$3 outside the U.S., and \$5 institutions. Sample copies are \$.50, including postage. Send checks made payable to **Gulf Solidarity** to P.O. Box 40155, San Francisco, CA 94140. We also welcome your contributions to help to continue to publish **Gulf Solidarity**.

EDITORIAL

(CONT.)

pets and find new ones, such new servants as Qabus, the Sultan of Oman, the princes of the Arab Emirates, and King Khalid of Saudi Arabia.

The imperialists have had to make some concessions in order to retain their vast interests in the area. By making superficial changes, the enemy thought they could influence the Omani people and turn them against the revolution. Thus, when Qabus was brought to power in Oman in 1970, imperialism spread propaganda within the country to glorify the change, using sophisticated reactionary Egyptian and Jordanian propaganda experts. Events have shown, however, that all the "reforms" undertaken by Qabus under the tutelage of U.S. imperialism have not achieved their objectives. For instance, the latest news from Oman reveals that Qabus has been unsuccessful in rallying the tribes to his support, and has abolished a special tribal military force and imprisoned its chieftains. Qabus has also recently reintroduced his father's policy of public flogging of those people who disagree with his rule. This was done recently to some Royal Guards who submitted their resignations. After their punishment, they were sent directly to prison.

The reforms that have been instituted have been ineffectual and have only unmasked the puppet nature of Qabus' regime, exposed him as a traitor to the Omani people and revealed the actual forces that control Oman: the U.S., dying British colonialism, Iran, Jordan, and other mercenary forces.

Undoubtedly the Omani revolution, strengthened by the wide support of the Omani people and by the victories it has achieved, poses a definite threat not only to Qabus but to other Arab reactionaries in the area, to the puppet Shah of Iran, and above all to U.S. imperialism.

At first, combined British, Qabus' mercenary and Jordanian forces tried to crush the revolution. In spite of their arms superiority and incessant harrassment, the imprisonment and torture of thousands of Omani patriots, and the transformation of many villages into Vietnam-style "strategic hamlets" in an attempt to break the population's contact with the militants, the revolution continued to achieve victories and liberated more and more territory. Alarmed by these developments, U.S. imperialism directed the Shah of Iran to take on the job.

The Shah's military power is propped up by the most sophisticated American

military equipment money can buy. Iran has become a huge military arsenal as part and parcel of the CENTO pact, the manifestation of the Nixon Doctrine in the Gulf area. The Nixon Doctrine calls for local U.S.-allied regimes to be strengthened militarily in order to assume the role of gendarmes in suppressing revolutionary movements in their regions. The aim is to preserve the interests of the U.S. and its puppets without necessitating direct U.S. intervention. Thus, the imperialists have assigned to the Iranian regime the role of repressing the revolutionary and nationalist movements in Iran and the entire Gulf and Arabian peninsula, while the Saudi Arabian regime assumes the role of financing the anti-revolutionary forces in the Arab world. These regimes have the single common aim—defined and determined by the U.S. imperialism—of crushing the nationalist and revolutionary forces to facilitate the plunder of the people's resources.

The newly introduced imperialist scheme, the "Gulf Security Pact," is an extension of the CENTO pact and the Nixon Doctrine. Its aim is to unite the reactionary forces and secure their oil resources. Although there are some differences among the puppets themselves over how to implement this U.S.-engineered pact, in the final analysis, when facing the growing people's movements, these differences become trivial. The clearest indication of their common strategic objective is the current vicious imperialist-reactionary offensive aimed at crushing the Palestinian and Omani revolutions in order to preserve the status quo and put an end to those revolutionary armed struggles, which U.S. imperialism and its puppets fear most. The daily attacks on these two revolutions by U.S. clients from Assad of Syria to Qabus of Oman are the latest examples of the U.S. liquidationist plan.

Because of the nature of the combined aggression against the revolutionary movements, the struggle has to take different and more complex forms. The PFLO has proven its strength and ability to defend the revolution and the Omani people by adapting its strategy to these new conditions.

In celebrating the 12th anniversary of the Omani revolution, we stand in solidarity with the Omani people and fully support the PFLO in their continuous struggle against the savage, concerted attacks from U.S. imperialism and its local puppets. We must also expose the collusion of the West-

ern press, which has consistently distorted news from the Gulf and tried to cover up the deep involvement of U.S. imperialism in the infliction of suffering and exploitation on the peoples of the Middle East. We ask all progressive groups and individuals to join us in our efforts to inform the American people what the U.S. government is really doing in the Gulf and to extend their support to the Omani people.

Continued from page 1

unfolding in the Gulf with little opposition in North America.

It is the principal aim of the **Gulf Solidarity** to break through the blockade of information, to inform progressive North Americans of the nature of events in this critical period in the Gulf region and thus to help build a base of support for the revolutionary forces.

This is also the aim of the Gulf Solidarity Committee which has been formed to publish **Gulf Solidarity Bulletin on Oman and the Gulf**. We hope **Gulf Solidarity** can serve as a national publication both for supporters of the Omani and Gulf revolution and for a much larger group of North Americans who need to know what is really occurring in the Gulf today. The principles around which the Gulf Solidarity Committee has united are:

1. Oppose the U.S.-backed Iranian invasion of Oman.
2. Oppose U.S. military presence and intervention in the Gulf region.
3. Support the Omani revolution led by the PFLO.
4. Respect the political line and principles of the PFLO.

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